

Amendments to the Claims

Please cancel Claim 12. Please amend Claims 1, 13, 23, 31, 38, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 56 and 59. The Claim Listing below will replace all prior versions of the claims in the application:

Claim Listing:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of monitoring supply chain activity, comprising:
 - extracting supply-related data at independent supply chain sites within the supply chain, the data being maintained in plural formats at the supply chain sites;
 - translating the extracted data into a common format;
 - uploading the extracted data from each supply chain site to a data collection site, the data collection site collecting the extracted data; and
 - upon a request from a user associated with a supply chain site,
 - formatting, at the data collection site, a portion of the collected data into one of a plurality of views, responsive to criteria selected by the user, for presentation to the user, the portion of formatted data being dependent on access rights granted to the user's supply chain site, and
 - publishing the formatted data view to the user's supply chain site;[[.]]
at the data collection site, monitoring inbound data from multiple supply chain sites;
detecting a problem condition if there is a surplus or shortage in the supply chain;
and
responding to the problem condition by asserting an alert.
2. (Original) The method of Claim 1 wherein the data is translated at each supply chain site before uploading.
3. (Original) The method of Claim 1 wherein the data is translated at the data collection site after uploading.
4. (Original) The method of Claim 1, further comprising, at each supply chain site:

scanning for new or changed data at regular intervals; and
uploading upon finding new or changed data.

5. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein at least one format is a spreadsheet.
6. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein at least one format is a relational database.
7. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein at least one format is a text file.
8. (Original) The method of Claim 1 wherein at least two formats at one or more supply chain sites are different.
9. (Original) The method of Claim 1 wherein data comprises inventory data.
10. (Original) The method of Claim 1 wherein data comprises purchase orders.
11. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 1 wherein data stored at the supply chain sites is stored in legacy database systems.
12. Canceled
13. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1[[2]] wherein raising an alert comprises highlighting an Alert indicator on a user screen.
14. (Original) The method of Claim 13 further comprising, upon selection of the highlighted Alert indicator by a user:
displaying details of the detected problem condition.
15. (Original) The method of Claim 14 wherein the details of the detected problem condition are displayed in a graphical format.

16. (Original) The method of Claim 1 further comprising:
using animation to present the data to a user.
17. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein supply chain sites include any or all of contract managers (CMs), vendors, distributors and an original equipment manufacturer (OEM).
18. (Original) The method of Claim 1, further comprising:
encrypting the data before uploading.
19. (Original) The method of Claim 1 wherein uploading is over the Internet.

20. (Original) The method of Claim 1 further comprising:
providing, to the data collection site, materials requirements information for a product at any or all stages in the product's lifecycle.
21. (Original) The method of Claim 1, further comprising:
generating an analysis report responsive to report selection by a user; and
providing the generated report responsive to user selection of report destinations.
22. (Original) The method of Claim 21, wherein providing the generated report comprises at least one of emailing, printing, storing as a file or displaying on a monitor or a screen, the report.
23. (Currently Amended) A system for monitoring supply chain activity, comprising:
a data collection center, comprising
a data collector[[],]; and
a publisher for publishing data from the data collector upon request; and
a plurality of independent supply chain sites within the supply chain, each supply chain site comprising:
a data storage device for maintaining supply-related data[[],];

a data transfer engine (DTE) which extracts the supply-related data from the data storage device and transfers the extracted data to the data collection center[[],];

input means for allowing a user associated with a supply chain site to query the data collector[, and];

a display for displaying data published by the publisher in response to a query[.];and

an alert indicator which indicates an alert condition if there is a surplus or shortage in the supply chain.

24. (Original) The system of Claim 23, wherein the data collector is a database.
25. (Original) The system of Claim 23, wherein data stored at a supply chain site is stored in at least one of a database, a spreadsheet, and a text file.
26. (Original) The system of Claim 23 wherein the DTE comprises encryption means for encrypting the data before transferring.
27. (Original) The system of Claim 23 wherein data is displayed in a window on the display at a site according to a category selected by a user at the site, responsive to authorization granted to the site.
28. (Original) The system of Claim 27 further comprising, for each category, at least one analysis filter selectable by the user for setting criteria to be used in filtering the data to be displayed.
29. (Original) The system of Claim 28 wherein filtering comprises sorting.
30. (Original) The system of Claim 28 wherein filters are organized hierarchically.
31. (Currently Amended) The system of Claim 27[[],] further comprising, in each window, including the [[an]] alert indicator for indicating the existence of an alert condition.

32. (Original) The system of Claim 31, wherein the alert turns red to indicate the existence of an alert condition.
33. (Original) The system of Claim 31, where an alert condition indicates a shortage.
34. (Original) The system of Claim 31, where an alert condition indicates a surplus.
35. (Original) The system of Claim 31 wherein alert conditions are represented in graphical form.
36. (Original) The system of Claim 35 wherein alarm conditions and lead times are color-coded.
37. (Original) The system of Claim 35 wherein when the user clicks in the graphical representation, detailed information about the alert is displayed.
38. (Currently Amended) A computer program product for monitoring a supply chain, the computer program product comprising a computer usable medium having computer readable code thereon, including program code which:
 - receives, at a data collection site, supply-related data extracted from at least one independent supply chain site, supply-related data being maintained in different formats at different supply-chain sites;
 - stores, at the data collection site, the received data in a common format; [[and]] upon a user request, the user being associated with a supply chain site,
 - formats a portion of the collected data into one of a plurality of views, responsive to criteria selected by the user, for presentation to the user, the portion of formatted data being dependent on access rights granted to the user, and
 - publishes the formatted data view to the user;[[.]]

at the data collection site, monitoring inbound data from multiple supply chain sites;

detecting a problem condition if there is a supply chain surplus or shortage; and

responding to the problem condition by asserting an alert.

39. (Original) The computer program product of Claim 38, which additionally translates the data to a common format.
40. (Currently Amended) The computer program product of Claim [[38]] 39, wherein the data is translated to a common format at the supply chain site.
41. (Currently Amended) A computer system comprising:
 - a processor located at a data collection site;
 - a memory system connected to the processor; and
 - a computer program, in the memory, which:
 - receives supply-related data extracted from at least one independent supply chain site, wherein the data is maintained and extracted at plural supply chain sites in plural formats; [[and]]
 - upon a user request, the user being associated with a supply chain site,
 - formats a portion of the collected data into one of a plurality of
 - views, responsive to criteria selected by the user, for presentation to the user, the portion of formatted data being dependent on access rights granted to the user, and
 - publishes the formatted data view to the user;[[.]]
 - at the data collection site, monitoring inbound data from the supply chain site;
 - determining a problem condition if there is a supply chain shortage or surplus; and
 - responding to the problem condition by asserting an alert.

program code for storing the received data in a common format, at the data collection site;

program code for formatting, at the data collection site, and upon a user request, the user being associated with a supply chain site, a portion of the collected data into one of a plurality of views, responsive to criteria selected by the user, for presentation to the user, the portion of formatted data being dependent on access rights granted to the user; [[and]]

program code for publishing the formatted data view to the user[.];

program code for monitoring, at the data collection site, inbound data from multiple supply chain sites;

program code for detecting a problem condition if there is a supply chain surplus or shortage; and

program code for responding to the problem condition by asserting an alert.

43. (Currently Amended) A system for monitoring supply chain activity comprising a plurality of supply chain sites, comprising:

means for extracting, at each supply chain site, supply-related data to be monitored, wherein the data is maintained in plural formats located among the supply chain sites, at least one of the supply chain sites being independent of another supply chain site;

means for translating the data to a common format;

means for uploading and collecting, from each supply chain site, the extracted data to a data collection site;

means for formatting, at the data collection site, a portion of the collected data into one of a plurality of views, responsive to criteria selected by a user associated with a supply chain site, for presentation to the user, the portion of formatted data being dependent on access rights granted to the user's supply chain site[, and]];

means for publishing the formatted data view to the user's supply chain site[.];

means for monitoring, at the data collection site, inbound data from multiple supply chain sites;

means for detecting a problem condition if there is a supply chain surplus or shortage; and

means for responding to the problem condition by asserting an alert.

44. (Currently Amended) A method of monitoring supply chain activity, the supply chain [[comprising]] having a plurality of supply chain sites, the method comprising:
 - establishing a communications link between a first supply chain site and a data collection center;
 - installing a data transfer engine (DTE) in the first supply chain site, the first supply chain site being independent of a second supply chain site in the supply chain, the first supply chain site maintaining [[its]] proprietary supply chain information in a format that is different from a format in which the second supply chain site maintains [[its]] proprietary supply chain information, the DTE[[,]];
 - [[upon a]] triggering an event[[,]] by:
 - extracting [[selected]] the respective proprietary supply-related information from the first supply chain site, and
 - forwarding, over the communications link, the extracted proprietary information ~~of the first supply chain site~~ to a data collection center[[.]];
monitoring the proprietary information for problem condition, the problem condition resulting from a surplus or shortage in the supply chain; and
responding to a problem condition by asserting an alert.
45. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 44[[,]] wherein the DTE ~~further~~ monitoring at the DTE the first supply chain site's respective proprietary information of the first supply chain site for changes, and the triggering event being responsive to detection detecting [[of]] a change to the respective proprietary information.
46. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 44, the triggering event being the end of a time period.
47. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 44, the triggering event being a request from the data collection center.

48. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 44, the link comprising any or all of: Internet; a dial-up connection; and a virtual private network.
49. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 44, the forwarded data being formatted using a formatting language.
50. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 49, wherein the formatting language is XML.
51. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 44, the DTE being implemented in software.
52. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 44, the DTE further:
prior to forwarding selected data to the data collection center, translating the selected data to a common format accepted by the data collection center.
53. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 44, the data collection center analyzing the supply chain based on proprietary information from at least the first and second supply chain sites, all proprietary information having been translated into the common format.
54. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 44, the data collection center analyzing the supply chain based on proprietary information from at least the first and second supply chain sites.
55. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 44, wherein the proprietary information includes any or all of orders, lead times, inventory, enterprise resource planning data, material resource planning data, and purchasing information.
56. (Currently Amended) A method of monitoring, at a data collection center, supply chain activity, the supply chain comprising including a plurality of supply chain sites, the method comprising:

receiving, from at least two independent supply chain sites, supply-related information, said information being extracted from said supply chain site and being proprietary as to that supply chain site, the supply chain sites maintaining their respective proprietary information in different formats;

storing the received information in a database, in a common format;

receiving, from a user at a first supply chain site of the plurality of supply chain sites, a request for information; and

in response to the request,

formatting requested information into one of a plurality of views, the information provided being dependent on access rights granted to the user's supply chain site,

performing an analysis of the supply chain based on the information received from the plural supply chain sites to determine if there is a surplus or shortage in the supply chain, [[and]]

asserting an alarm condition[[s]] resulting from the analysis, and forwarding the formatted view to the user.

57. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 56, wherein proprietary information is received from at least one supply chain site in the common format, said proprietary information having been translated to the common format at the supply chain site.
58. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 56, herein proprietary information is received from at least one supply chain site in the supply chain site's proprietary format, the method further comprising:
translating said received proprietary information into the common format.
59. (Currently Amended) A method of monitoring supply chain activity, the supply chain comprising a plurality of supply chain sites, at least two supply chain sites being independent of each other, the method comprising:
at each supply chain site:
maintaining proprietary supply chain information in a format that is different from a format in which at least one other supply chain site

maintains its proprietary supply chain information,
extracting selected proprietary supply-related information, and
upon a triggering event, forwarding the extracted proprietary
information to a data collection center that operates independently of the
supply chain site; and

at the data collection center:

receiving, from each supply chain site, the respective forwarded
proprietary supply chain information,

storing the received information in a database, in a common
format,

receiving, from a user at a first supply chain site of the plurality of
supply chain sites, a request for information, and

in response to the request,

formatting requested information into one of a
plurality of views, the information provided being
dependent on access rights granted to the user's supply
chain site,

performing an analysis of the supply chain based on
the information received from the plural supply chain sites to
determine if there is a surplus or shortage in the supply
chain[[and]]

asserting an alarm condition[[s]] resulting from the
analysis, and

forwarding the formatted view to the user.

Please add new claim 60:

- B2*
60. (New) A method of monitoring supply chain activity, the method comprising:
from a plurality of supply chain sites, extracting proprietary supply-related
information into a common format;
monitoring the proprietary information to detect any changes; and
responding to a change in the proprietary supply chain information by asserting an
alarm condition.
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